

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

CHARACTERISTIC AND ELOQUENT
SERMON BY REV. DR. TALMAGE.

He Takes For His Subject From Conquest to Conquest—Is Christianity Retreating and the Bible Losing Its Hold?—An Encouraging Discourse.

BROOKLYN, March 18.—In the Tabernacle today Dr. Talmage preached a most eloquent and characteristically vigorous sermon in refutation of the renewed assertion of the enemies of religion that Christianity is retreating and the Bible losing its hold upon the hearts and consciences of men.

The subject of the discourse was, "Conquest to Conquest." The text, being taken from Amos 1: 13, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper."

Picture of a tropical clime with a season so prosperous that the harvest reaches clear over to the planting time, and the swarthy husbandmen swinging the sickle in the thick grain almost feel the breath of the horses on their shoulders.

The horses hitched to the plow preparing for a new crop. "Behold the days come saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper." When is this? That is now. That is this day when hardly have you done reaping one harvest before the plowman is getting ready for another.

I know that many declare that Christianity has collapsed; that the Bible is an obsolete book; that the religion of the future is in the future; and I have come to understand that this book is the footstep of God.

An Arab guide was leading a French infidel across a desert, and ever and anon the Arab guide would get down in the sand and pray to the Lord. And after awhile the infidel said, "How do you know there is any God?" and the Arab guide said, "How do I know that a man and a camel passed along our tent last night?"

And you wonder how I know whether there is any God. Look at that sunset: Is that the footstep of a man? And by the same process you and I have come to understand that this book is the footstep of God.

But now let us see whether the Bible is a last year's almanac. Let us see whether the church of God is in a full retreat, muskets, cannons, and haversacks strewn all about. The great English historian, Sharon Turner, a man of vast learning and of great accuracy, in a history of the church, as well as in a history, gives this overwhelming statistic in regard to Christians in the different centuries: In the first century, 500,000 Christians; in the second century, 2,000,000 Christians; in the third century, 5,000,000 Christians; in the fourth century, 10,000,000 Christians; in the fifth century, 15,000,000 Christians; in the sixth century, 20,000,000 Christians; in the seventh century, 24,000,000 Christians; in the eighth century, 30,000,000 Christians; in the ninth century, 35,000,000 Christians; in the tenth century, 40,000,000 Christians; in the eleventh century, 70,000,000 Christians; in the twelfth century, 80,000,000 Christians; in the thirteenth century, 75,000,000 Christians; in the fourteenth century, 100,000,000 Christians; in the fifteenth century, 125,000,000 Christians; in the sixteenth century, 155,000,000 Christians; in the seventeenth century, 290,000,000 Christians; in the eighteenth century, 350,000,000 Christians; in the nineteenth century, 500,000,000 Christians.

Poor Christians! What a pity it is to have no friends! How lonely it must be! Who will take it to the poorhouse? Poor Christians! "Three hundred millions in one century. In a few weeks of the year 1881 2,500,000 copies of the New Testament circulated. Why, the earth is like an old castle with a wall and a part of a century ready to understand every day. Lay aside all Christendom and see how beatitudinous it is being surrounded and bombarded and attacked by this all conquering gospel.

At the beginning of the century there were only 150 million Christians. Now there are 25,000 missionaries and native helpers and evangelists. At the beginning of this century there were only 50,000 heathen converts. Now there are 1,750,000 converts from heathendom.

There is not a season on the planet but the battery of cannon is planned and ready to march on north, south, east, west. You all know that the chief work of an army is to plant the batteries. It may take many days to plant the batteries, and they may do all their work in 10 minutes. These batteries are planted all along the equator and in all nations. It may take a good while to plant them, and they may do all their work in one day. They will. Nations are to be born in a day. But just come back to Christendom and recognize the fact that during the last 10 years as many people have been converted to Christianity as in all the centuries before.

I have to tell you that the room in which Voltaire wrote that prophecy was crowded from floor to ceiling with Bibles from Switzerland. Suppose the congress of the United States would pass a law that there should be no more Bibles printed in America and no more Bibles read. It there are 40,000,000 grown people in the United States, there would be 40,000,000 people in an army to put down such a law and defend their right to read the Bible. How many volumes of that book are published? Well, you say, 5,000. How many copies of that book are published? A hundred thousand.

Which is the more popular? Why, of course the one that has 100,000,000 copies abroad. And if this book has more copies abroad in the world, it there are five times as many Bibles abroad as any other book, does not that show you that the most popular book on the planet today is the Bible of God?

"Oh," say people, "the church is the power, and it is losing out from the world." Is it? A bishop of the Methodist church told me that he had seen every year of the church. There are at least 1,500 new Christian churches built in America every year. Does that look as though the church were fading out, as though it were a defunct institution? Which institution stands nearest the church? Is it the church of America today? I do not care in what city, or what neighborhood you go. Which institution is it? Is it the postoffice? Is it the hotel? Is it the lecture hall? Ah, you know it is not. You know that the institution which stands nearest to the church is the American people, the Christian church.

If you have ever seen a church turn down, you have seen thousands of people standing and looking at it—people who never go into a church—the tears raining down their cheeks. The whole story is told.

You may talk of the church being a collection of hypocrites, but when the diphtheria sweeps your children off whom do you send for? The postmaster, the attorney general, the hotel keeper, alderman? No, you send for a minister of this Book of religion. And if you are not a minister, you send for a man who has been in your house for the last 10 years, who has been in your house for the last 10 years, who has been in your house for the last 10 years.

And if there is a song to be sung at the obsequies of a man who has been in your house for the last 10 years, who has been in your house for the last 10 years, who has been in your house for the last 10 years, you sing the hymn which with which they sang their old Christian mother into her last sleep, or they sang the Sabbath school hymn which their little girl sang the last Sabbath afternoon she was out before she got that awful sickness which brought her to her last sleep.

The infidel says, "Infidelity shows its power." Let a man today declare himself infidel, and he can say what he will. Why, my friends, infidelity is not half so blatant in our day as it was in the days of our fathers. Do you know that in the days of our fathers there were pronounced infidels in public authority, and they could get away with it? Let a man today declare himself infidel, and he can say what he will. Why, my friends, infidelity is not half so blatant in our day as it was in the days of our fathers.

Do you think that such a scene could be enacted now as was enacted in the days of Robespierre, when a shameless woman was elevated as goddess and queen, and she sat on a throne of clouds, and she was called the goddess of Reason, and she was called the goddess of Reason, and she was called the goddess of Reason.

I know infidelity shows its power in our day. It is on the principle that if a man jumps overboard from a Cunard steamer he makes more excitement than all the 500 people that stay on the decks. But the fact that he jumps overboard does not stop the ship. Does that wreck the 500 passengers? It makes great excitement when a man jumps from a lecturing platform or from the pulpit into infidelity. But does that wreck the Bible and the church from carrying their millions of passengers to the skies?

They say—these men that science is overthrowing religion in our day. They look through the spectacles of the infidel scientists, and they say: "It is impossible that this book can be true. People are finding it out. The Bible has got to go overboard. Science is going to throw it overboard. Do you know that the Bible is the origin of all religion? It will be overthrown by infidel scientists who have 50 different theories about the origin of life? If they should come up in solid phalanx, all agreeing on one sentiment and one theory, perhaps Christianity might be damaged, but there are not as many as that. The people inside the church as outside the church.

People used to say: "There are so many different denominations of Christians. That shows there is nothing in religion." I have to tell you that all denominations agree on the two or three or four radical doctrines of the Christian religion. They are unanimous in regard to Jesus Christ, and they are unanimous in regard to the divinity of the Scriptures. How is it on the other side all split up. You cannot find two of them alike. Oh, it makes me sick to see these literary men going along with a copy of Darwin under one arm and a case of transfused grasshoppers and butterflies under the other arm, telling about the "survival of the fittest" and Huxley's protoplasm and the nebular hypothesis!

The fact is that some naturalists, just as soon as they find out the difference between the fittest and the least fit, and the fittest, while Agassiz, Agassiz, Agassiz, who never made any pretensions to being a Christian, put his feet on the doctrine of evolution and says: "I see that the fittest survive, and the least fit are being taken out of the world. That is the law of the fittest. Go to that dying man and tell him to pluck up courage for the future. Use your transcendental phrasology upon him. Tell him he ought to be, and the 'eternal verities now,' and the 'eternal verities now,' and the 'eternal verities now.'"

propose to render their verdict, no two of them agree on that verdict. "Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed on a verdict?" asks the court of the clerk of the jury. They come in after having spent the whole night in deliberating. If the jury say, "Yes, we have agreed," the verdict is recorded. But suppose one of the jurymen says, "I think the defendant is guilty of murder," and another says, "I think he is guilty of manslaughter in the second degree," and another man says, "I think he is guilty of manslaughter in the first degree," and another man says, "I think he is guilty of manslaughter in the third degree," and another man says, "I think he is guilty of manslaughter in the fourth degree," and another man says, "I think he is guilty of manslaughter in the fifth degree," and another man says, "I think he is guilty of manslaughter in the sixth degree," and another man says, "I think he is guilty of manslaughter in the seventh degree," and another man says, "I think he is guilty of manslaughter in the eighth degree," and another man says, "I think he is guilty of manslaughter in the ninth degree," and another man says, "I think he is guilty of manslaughter in the tenth degree," and another man says, "I think he is guilty of manslaughter in the eleventh degree," and another 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